

Use of Facemasks and Respirators in the Community

Very little is known about the benefits of wearing facemasks and respirators in a community setting to help control the spread of influenza. In the absence of clear science, the steps below offer a “best estimate” to help guide decisions. They will be revised as new information becomes available.

Consider wearing a facemask if

- You are sick with the flu and think you might have close contact with other people.
- You live with someone who has the flu (you therefore might be in the early stages of infection) and need to be in a crowded place. Limit the amount of time you spend in these crowded places and wear a facemask while you are there.
- You are well and do not expect to be in close contact with a sick person but need to be in a crowded place (within 6 feet) with **people not expected to be sick**. Limit the amount of time you spend in these crowded places and wear a facemask while you are there.

Consider wearing a respirator if

- You are well and you expect to be in close contact with **people who are known or thought to be sick with the flu**. Limit the amount of time you are in close contact with these people and wear a respirator during this time. These recommendations apply if you must take care of a sick person at home.

How to Use Facemasks and Respirators

Details on how to use facemasks and respirators can be found in the *Caring for the Flu at Home: A Self-Help Guide* found here: http://www.nj.gov/health/flu/documents/flu_guide.pdf

Adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

For updated information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on the use of facemasks and respirators, refer to:

<http://pandemicflu.gov/plan/community/maskguidancecommunity.html>



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